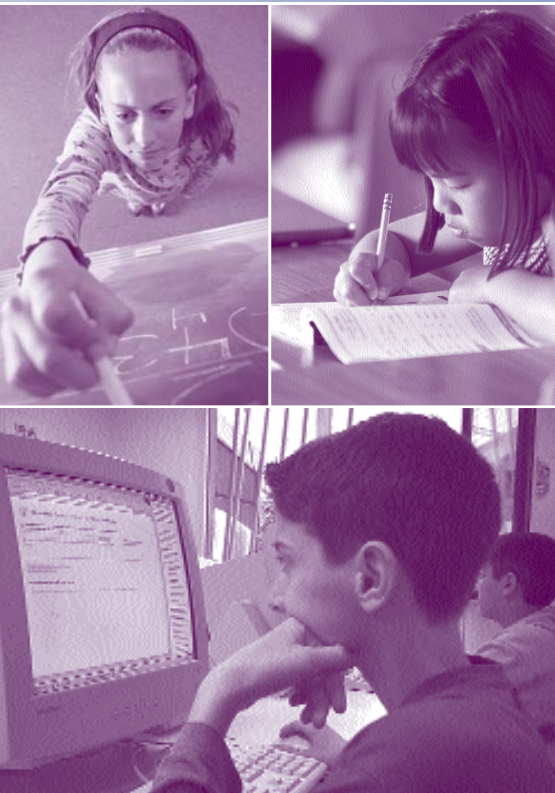


State Representative **Chet Dobis**



Session Report



- ☑ Economic Development in Northwest Indiana
- ☑ The New State Budget
- ☑ New Speed Limit Law

Economic Development

I believe it is the duty of the General Assembly to provide the opportunities for Indiana to **create, maintain and increase good-paying jobs** in growth areas of our economy. This year's legislature made economic development a priority.

I believe **the biggest economic development tool for northwest Indiana passed on April 29, 2005.** The biggest since the steel industry decided on the southern shores of Lake Michigan for its location in 1906. The changing economic demands are challenging, but make no mistake about it, transformation is taking place, one that will give a different character to our region.

The key is transportation, connecting us to Chicago, the nation and the world. I believe we have started northwest Indiana on the path with the passage of a new Regional Development Authority, **the first of its kind in Indiana.** I believe with the expansion of the Gary Regional Airport, extended passenger service on the

"The key is transportation, connecting us to Chicago, the nation and the world."

South Shore RR to south Lake County and Valparaiso, along with improved bus service, we have set the pace for the rest of this century. With investments in our lakeshore as well as other economic development projects, we are only limited by our imaginations.

And think about it, we can do all of this without a tax increase to Lake County taxpayers.

I am proud to say I played a leadership roll in this project and I look forward to its benefits for our children and grandchildren. **The future looks bright for northwest Indiana!**



INDIANA'S NEW BUDGET

School Funding Cuts and Increased Property Taxes

The new state budget that passed by a narrow margin increases property taxes and, at the same time, cuts funding for local schools. After years of bipartisan efforts to reform education and reduce property taxes, the current governor and his majority party have approved a budget that will cut state funding for many schools and raise property taxes by nearly \$850 million.

There are no minimum guarantees in state funding for schools, which means more than 140 school corporations will receive less money. Those corporations will be forced to eliminating teachers, to cut programs and to increase class sizes. Any additional funding for public schools will come primarily from raising local property taxes.

There will be reduced state support through the Property Tax Replacement Credit (PTRC), another move that will increase local property taxes. This eliminates the promise of just three years ago to provide more state support to combat rising property taxes in light of the historic and controversial statewide reassessment.

In addition, funding for the program that provides health care for the elderly, disabled and children will increase by five percent, although bipartisan experts have predicted a 10-percent growth. State assistance for road repairs and improvements will decrease as well.

It is a shame that the legacy of this session will be passage of a budget that turns its back on Indiana's schoolchildren and property taxpayers. For anyone who cares about education and local taxpayers, it is indefensible.



Rep. Dobis debates legislation at the House podium.



Inspector General

Fraud and corruption in state government will be investigated by an inspector general created through a new state law approved in 2005. Thanks to changes championed by House Democrats, this inspector will work with locally-elected prosecutors and judges to look into charges of wrongdoing and determine whether to proceed with criminal charges. Senate Bill 18 will also prohibit convicted felons, even those sentenced under plea agreements, to hold elected office.

Speed Limits

Hoosier drivers soon will be able to go faster on major roadways in Indiana.

Effective July 1, speed limits on rural sections of interstate highways will increase from 65 to

70 mph for cars and 60 to 65 mph for trucks. Speed limits on four-lane divided highways will increase from 55 to 60 mph following a study by the Indiana Department of Transportation to ensure the safety of higher speeds on those roads.



Fighting Crime

It will be illegal to run an Internet Web site that is engaged in unlawful or professional gambling. Open containers of alcohol will be prohibited in cars, with violators fined up to \$500.

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2005 Session Highlights



**Representative Dobis
addresses the House
of Representatives.**



**Representative Dobis
debates proposed
legislation.**

Representative Chet Dobis

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